

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MUSCAT 002010

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARPI, NEA/PPD (CWHITTLESEY), NEA/P (FFINVER),
IIP/G/NEA, IIP/T/ES (JSCHAFER, GCHRISTISON), AND EB/TPP
STATE PLEASE PASS NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION/LSIMARSKI AND
PPENHALE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [TBIO](#) [KPAO](#) [OIIP](#) [MU](#)

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR SPEAKER ON WITCHES BROOM DISEASE

REF: STATE 228322

1. Embassy Muscat requests that IIP and EB fund one or more agricultural biotechnology speakers to participate in Sultan Qaboos University's first international conference on the "Prevention and Treatment of Witches Broom Disease of Lime Trees" which will be held March 13-16, 2005. This request is keyed to the IIP speaker request format. Details follow:

2. Background: Witches Broom Disease of Lime Trees (WBDL) has decimated the Sultanate of Oman's once-vibrant lime industry. The symptoms of the disease -- abnormal growth on branches resembling tiny brooms of twigs -- were first described in Oman's lime trees in 1986, and by 1994 some 5% of the country's lime trees were infected. Oman's strain of WBDL is particularly virulent and by 1996, virtually all trees had succumbed, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Infected trees frequently survive a few years with poor yields and poor quality fruit, and ultimately die. In recent years the disease has spread to neighboring countries such as the United Arab Emirates, India, Iran and Pakistan and now poses a threat to lime and citrus worldwide. Oman used to grow enough limes (traditionally the second major fruit crop after dates) for local consumption and even export, but now must import the fruit. Effective treatment of the disease and the introduction of resistant hybrids will promote sustainable agriculture, increase acceptance of agricultural biotechnology in Oman, and potentially reduce migratory pressures from traditional agricultural areas in Oman.

3. MPP Goal: Both the Embassy and conference organizers from Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) believe that American expertise in this field is invaluable in identifying appropriate prevention, treatment and containment strategies for WBDL. Significant work on WBDL has been conducted in the United States at U.S. Department of Agriculture and private research institutions, particularly in the development of disease-resistant hybrids. Prevention and containment of the disease advances the Embassy's MPP goal of supporting Oman's economic growth to better the lives of all Omanis, particularly those in rural areas. U.S. participation in the conference will also support Oman's efforts to protect its agricultural and environmental resources from disease that, if left unchecked, could devastate the regional lime industry. The conference will serve as a catalyst to bring the Gulf countries and others together to share research and ideas on how to combat the spread of the disease and help to revive Oman's historical lime production by finding solutions to WBDL.

4. Specific Subject Speaker Is Expected To Address: This conference will present research on WBDL, explore prevention and treatment strategies, and propose transnational responses to the disease. The speaker should be prepared to address one or more of the above topics, and discuss the results of plant material research linked to the disease conducted by USDA facilities and private institutes in the United States.

5. Audience: Officials from the ministries of Agriculture and Fisheries; Regional Municipalities, Environment, and Water Resources; and Commerce and Industry; horticultural scientists, academics and international citrus researchers; businesspeople and farmers. SQU organizers expect participation from the entire GCC region and parts of South Asia where WBDL has spread.

6. Level Of Speaker Expertise: The speaker will lecture at a major international conference, participating as a discussant in sessions of the conference. The speaker will address strategies for treating WBDL and present proposals for transnational responses to the disease. In addition to the conference, the Embassy will program the speaker at agricultural colleges, where he/she will be asked to address Sudden Decline of Mango disease (SDM), which is also present in Oman. In addition, the speaker will engage in press interviews on his/her area of expertise.

7. Time Frame: FY05; Q2; Embassy requests speaker for four days (March 12-16, 2005). Arrive before March 12. Conference dates are March 13-16, 2005.

8. Name Request: Embassy requests that IIP recruit one or more of the following speakers, all of whom are knowledgeable about the treatment and prevention of WBDL and SDM. They have also served as advisors to government agencies on policies to prevent the

spread of agricultural diseases. The suggested speakers are listed in order of preference:

1A. Harold W. Browning
Center Director and Professor of Entomology
Citrus Research and Education Center
University of Florida/IFAS
Tel: 863-956-1151
E-mail: hwbr@crec.ifas.ufl.edu

1B. Mikeal L. Roose
Professor of Genetics
Department of Botany and Plant Sciences
University of California - Riverside
Tel: 909-787-4137
E-mail: roose@citrus.ucr.edu

1C. J.W. Grosser
Professor, Citrus Education and Research Center
University of Florida/IFAS
Tel: 863-956-1151
E-mail: jwg@crec.ifas.ufl.edu

1D. C.J. Chang
Professor, Department of Plant Pathology
University of Georgia, Griffin Campus
Tel: 770-412-4015
E-mail: cchang@griffin.uga.edu

1E. Fred G. Gmitter Jr.
Professor, Citrus Research and Education Center
University of Florida/IFAS
Tel: 1-863-956-1151
E-mail: fgg@crec.ifas.ufl.edu

1F. Dr. C.J. Lovatt
Professor, Department of Botany and Plant Sciences
University of California - Riverside
E-mail: carol.lovatt@ucr.edu

1G. Randy C. Ploetz
Professor, Department of Plant Pathology
University of Florida - Tropical Crops Research Center
Tel: 305-246-7000
E-mail: rcp@ifas.ufl.edu

1H. Prof. William S. Castle
Citrus Research and Education Center
University of Florida/IFAS
E-mail: castle@crec.ifas.ufl.edu

1I. Gloria A. Moore
Professor, Horticultural Science Department
University of Florida
E-mail: gam@gnv.ifas.ufl.edu

1J. Dr. Walter Kender
Professor, Citrus Research and Education Center
University of Florida
E-mail: kender@crec.ifas.ufl.edu

1K. Prof. Kohn da Graca
Professor of Plant Pathology
Texas A&M University-Kingsville Citrus Center
Tel: 956-968-2132
E-mail: jdagraca@ag.tamu.edu

1L. W. O. Dawson
Eminent Scientist
Citrus Research and Education center
University of Florida/IFAS
E-mail: wodtmv@crec.ifas.ufl.edu

1M. Eliezer S. Louzada, Ph.D.
Texas A&M University-Kingsville Citrus Center
Tel: 956-968-2132
E-mail: e-louzada@tamu.edu

19. Language Requirements: Fluent English only.

110. Funding: Per reftel, the Embassy requests that IIP and EB fund this speaker. Conference organizers will provide lodging during the three-day conference.

111. Post Responsible Officer: Public Affairs Officer Charles G. Cole; Office Phone: (968) 698-989 Ext. 433; Office Fax: (968) 699-771; Office Fax: (968) 699 771; IVG/DSN: 741-4433; Mobile: (968) 941-5561; Home: (968) 603-729; E-mail: ColeCG@state.gov

BALTIMORE